

1 John Series

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John's Prologue (1:1-4)

I. Review & Introduction:

3 basic questions every person must and does answer (Slides 2-4)

Question	Theocratic Answer	Pagan Answer
Metaphysical (reality)	Creator/creature distinction	Continuity of Being
Epistemological (truth)	God's revelation necessary	Man's speculations necessary
Ethical (conduct)	God's holiness	Subjective like/dislike

Greek culture: unchanging form / changing matter

Illustration of the problem of universal concepts using the concept of "two" that accompanies every depiction such as "2", "two", 2 objects, etc. Where do such concepts exist?

Christian absorption and compromise with Greek culture: spirit / flesh ==> ethics pertain to spirit, not to flesh

John focuses upon the Incarnation which is spirit and flesh together. Historical critics try to separate the concept "Christ" (i.e., the theological development preached by the apostles and followers called by liberal scholars as the "kerygmatic Christ") from the material body "Jesus" (i.e., the historical person only vaguely accessible from ancient reports called by liberal scholars the "historical-real-Jesus"). (Slide 5)

II. John's Prologue (1:1-4)

A. 1:1-2 (Slide 6)

Observations??

- Verbs?
- Subject "we"

Interpretation??

- "Beginning"
- Empirical observation => can what is idea (number, triangle, goodness, justice) exist in our domain?
- Impact on response to Incarnation

"Eternal life": where was it prior to the Incarnation?

Triunity of man: unseen nature => seen person => person's affects (personality)

TRINITY: Father Son Spirit

Pre-incarnate existence ==>

- (1) EL was intra-Trinity personal relationship prior to Creation and Incarnation
- (2) “Temporal Life” within creation is revelatory of intra-Trinity personal relationship
- (3) Eternal life is not a mere “addition”; it is actually an “admission” into the personal intra-Trinity relationship.

B. 1:3-4

Observations??

- Only 2 of 4 verbs in 1:1 re-appear.
- “Testify” in Jewish community called upon the 9th commandment not to commit perjury so biblical writers who testified of historical events falsely violated fundamental Jewish ethics

Interpretation?

- Discussion of examples of historic events: the virgin birth and the incarnate life of Christ as revelation of God “located” in Jesus’ body and soul (Slides 7 & 8)
- These great events of the Incarnation must be interpreted in view of the Trinity not interpreted by pagan views of nature and divine revelation. (Slide 9)
- To communicate these truths to unbelievers, remember that every unbeliever has a “Trojan horse” in their heart because he has been created in the image of God and inherently knows in the depth of his heart that God exists and he is accountable to Him. Pascal, the Christian mathematician who played such an important role in early statistics once wrote: (Slide 10)

“What does this raving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself” *Pensees* #425

Listen to your unbelieving acquaintances to express their “heart longing” for God

- Hinduism = an impersonal god
- Buddhism = nirvana and destruction of personhood
- Islam = no personal relationship with Allah
- Western secularist = only meeting one’s material needs; Atheist Walter Kaufmann: man is a “God-intoxicated ape”
- Eccles. 3:11 “He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end”
- MacArthur: conscience = our “skylight”

Eternal life for us — **John 17:3** “And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

1:3-4 cont'd (Slide 11)

- “Declare” verbal truth ==> result in fellowship--1st with apostles, then as a further result with God.

Roman Catholicism	Protestantism
Apostolic teaching available in both written and oral forms with both preserved by the Church	Apostolic teaching only available as preserved in the written tradition of the canon of Scripture that once written is authority for Church (Deut 13,18; Gal 1:8)
Revelation continues (expansive)	Revelation better understood (explanatory)

“your” vs. “our” joy - a textual difference between Majority Text and Critical Text but see 2 John for how John uses “our joy”